



European Civil Service Federation
Fédération de la Fonction Publique Européenne

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON EXIT CONDITIONS

CALL FOR A REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR TELEWORKING, ANNUAL LEAVE AND FLEXTIME

More than 1400 of you have replied to our survey.

Thank you for your many ideas.

The Federation presents the results here and following your advice, calls on DG HR to open a social dialogue to review the rules for teleworking, annual leave and flexitime.



Dear colleagues,

Work life in the Commission after the Coronavirus pandemic has subsided

The Administration should by now have learnt from the current experience that they can trust their staff to work just as, or even more effectively while teleworking five days a week for months on end. Post-Coronavirus, the world of work not only in the Commission, but everywhere will be very different.

Based on the requests expressed by the staff, **the Federation** calls on DG HR to open as soon as possible a social dialogue in order to conduct a major review of the rules for teleworking, annual leave and flexitime to shape the new normality that the Commission will emerge into after the Coronavirus pandemic has subsided.

Moreover, **the Federation** already suggests that the new rules should include the following new possibilities:

- Permanent structural teleworking as the default standard mode of working without limitations imposed from hierarchy.
- Telework up to 50% of the time and up to 5 days per week.
- Teleworking from another country should be made possible and accommodated within normal working practices.
- The normal rules of flexitime should apply while in the office and while teleworking with revised core hours
- The removal, at least this year, of the limit of 12 days carry-over of annual leave to the following year.

Here are the main findings of the survey:

How do you feel about the current teleworking phase?

76% of staff find that teleworking works fine for them and many state that they can do 90% to 100% of their work at home.

Only 6% are still having significant difficulties, for instance of loneliness for those who are at home alone.

20% find it difficult to balance work and family life. 13% feel that their mental health is suffering.

At least 17% have problems with physical health - mostly back and limb pains and eyestrain from:

- poor ergonomics and
- inadequate IT equipment (a lack of large screens, keyboards and printers).

Only 3% still have problems with their hierarchy.

But those that do complain of big difficulties with those few HoUs and Directors who are ignoring the DG HR teleworking guidelines by imposing tight deadlines and unrealistic workloads, sending urgent emails 24/7, and pressurising staff to return to the office.

Teleworking from another country is often requested, for instance to re-unite families where the spouse works in a different country to where weekend travel is not currently possible.

When we come out of confinement, what would you like to do?

66% of staff wish to continue teleworking throughout all of the Commission's planned phases until the Coronavirus is under control, for instance until a vaccine is available.

Many expressed fear at the prospect of returning to the office and using public transport – after all no member of the hierarchy will take the responsibility to guarantee to staff that there is no risk of them contracting the virus in the office.

There is a minority of staff, mostly those who are feeling lonely at home, who wish to return to the office, even if the office conditions will be unrecognisable from earlier times.

Only 6% wish to return full time and 19% part time.

Parents say that in any case they cannot return to the office until the schools re-open. Luxembourg trans-frontier workers say that the German border controls will need to be lifted before any return to the office as delays can be more than one hour each way.

Many colleagues point out that with all of the restrictions – social distancing, no meetings, no cafeteria to meet colleagues, strict health and safety measures - going back to the office will offer no added value because they will be almost as isolated and far less safe than being at home.

Many fear working in Open Spaces and shared offices and there are major doubts about health and safety: transmission of the virus through air-

conditioning, lifts, opening doors, narrow corridors and stairs, hygiene in toilets, renewing PPE... even if we are provided with masks and gel, and offices and IT equipment are disinfected.

Colleagues also suggest that the current age limit to be included in the vulnerable group who are allowed to telework indefinitely is too high and should be set at 58.

What are your plans for the summer period?

57% would like to take holidays abroad this summer if borders are re-opened, but 30% would prefer to keep on working while the pandemic continues and take their holidays later, even next year.

25% would also like the possibility to do teleworking from their home country, and a very large number, 40% would like to be able to combine their holidays with teleworking from their holiday destination.

The Federation recommends that the Commission should accommodate these various requests by introducing exceptional measures to allow all staff to combine annual leave with teleworking and to remove the limit of 12 days on carry-over of annual leave to next year.

THE FEDERATION

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